

The next round of collective bargaining is critically important for most MGEU members. After several challenging years at the bargaining table, MGEU members now face the erosion of their pay by the return of high inflation.

Negotiating solid settlements will require a strategic, multi-pronged approach that increases our union's leverage at the bargaining table by:

- Building genuine solidarity among members;
- Demonstrating a willingness to take job action, including strike action, to get a fair deal;
- Fostering public/client support for our members;
- Harnessing our strong internal bargaining capacity; and
- Adopting tactics and positions that address today's new labour market conditions.

To achieve these objectives, MGEU proposes the following 4-pronged bargaining framework, which aligns closely with the MGEU's strategic priorities: increasing our leverage at the bargaining table, engaging members, growing and supporting our activists, and continuous technological modernization.

1. Develop and Implement a Coordinated, Union-wide Bargaining Framework around COLA/Inflation-Protection

▪ **A Coordinated Bargaining Framework**

Several of MGEU's largest bargaining units - GOLICO, MPI, Post Secondary, Civil Service - are either in bargaining or entering a new round of bargaining in 2022 and 2023. This creates opportunities to build solidarity across the union and increase our leverage. To achieve a coordinated strategy across MGEU bargaining tables, MGEU will:

- Establish a central bargaining coordinating and support committee to develop a shared, union-wide bargaining framework;
- Identify, through this committee, shared bargaining priorities across MGEU tables - priorities around which member solidarity can be built, and priorities that can be communicated through a union-wide communications and outreach plan;
- Facilitate, through this committee, coordination among, and ongoing support for MGEU bargaining tables to maximize leverage around the bargaining framework.

▪ **COLA/Inflation-Protection as the Central Bargaining Priority**

Surging inflation threatens the gains that have been for all MGEU members. MGEU proposes that the centrepiece of this bargaining framework be protecting the value of member wages by negotiating inflation-protection provisions such as COLA.

2. Develop and Implement an Aggressive Bargaining Outreach and Communications Plan

▪ **A Common Message**

With a coordinated, union-wide bargaining framework and with COLA/inflation-protection as a simple shared bargaining priority, a common set of messages can be developed and effectively communicated, both internally and externally. The core message will aim to persuade members that to get a better deal, they need to be willing to take a stand together for it.

▪ **Internal Member Outreach and Communications Campaign**

To build support for a strike mandate and job action, MGEU will undertake a major member outreach and communications campaign to:

- Rally support around COLA and other common bargaining priorities; and
- Build support for a strike mandate and potential job/strike action.

This outreach campaign will employ a variety of tools such as member-to-member campaigns, phone banks, workplace tours, webinars, lunch-and-learn events, telephone town halls, email/text updates, and print materials.

▪ **A Disciplined Public Message**

Rallying around COLA provides an opportunity to communicate a simple, reasonable, and easy-to-explain message to the public. With a common bargaining priority/message across MGEU tables and a coordinated approach, the number of voices amplifying that priority/message to the public will be much greater and, thus, more effective.

3. Modernize MGEU's Strike Toolbox

▪ **A Review of Strike Tactics, Strike Pay, Dues during a Strike, and the Defence Fund**

MGEU's current policy, bylaw and constitutional provisions regarding strike pay, dues during a strike, and the Defence Fund do not currently support the achievement of strike mandates or effective job action. Strike-related policies are based on the classic unit-wide strike scenario without adequate provision for targeted strikes, rotating strikes, or non-strike job action, such as refusing overtime. In many cases, strike pay is too low for members to risk strike action. The strike pay formula is not designed for the range of strike and job actions. The rigid dues formula for members required to perform essential work during a strike can yield unfair outcomes. And targets for the size of MGEU's Defence Fund need be re-examined to accommodate updates to these policies. For these reasons, MGEU has tasked the Finance Committee with conducting a review of these provisions and making recommendations to modernize them. The overall objective is to facilitate the achievement of strike mandates and build a willingness among members to use strike and job action tools when necessary.

▪ **Modernize the Strike Toolbox ASAP with a Virtual Special Convention Early in 2023**

The MGEU Board of Directors will consider these recommendations and propose a comprehensive package of constitutional, bylaw, and policy amendments to a virtual Special Convention at the earliest opportunity. The communication and implementation of these

changes will provide a significant opportunity to communicate to members (1) that achieving members' bargaining objectives will require strong strike mandates and a willingness to take job action if necessary; and (2) that MGEU is taking steps to better support members who take job action.

4. Campaign for Strong Strike Mandates

To bargain robust COLA/inflation-protection provisions, MGEU bargaining committees will need strong strike mandates from members - to show employers that our bargaining committees have the strong backing of members who are willing to take job action to achieve their bargaining objectives.

History suggests that members will not necessarily provide a strong strike mandate, even when they expect a robust collective agreement. This is particularly so in times when the provincial government has forced members into a defensive position through funding cuts, job reductions, privatization, and a general disrespect for public sector workers.

MGEU will need to campaign to persuade members that, to achieve a better deal, they need to be willing to fight for it by taking a stand together. Providing their bargaining committee with a strong strike mandate is a critical way to show that.

▪ **Update and Grow Member Contact Information, Identify More Workplace Contacts**

An effective member-focused campaign for a strike mandate requires that MGEU have up-to-date contact information for as many members as possible. It will also require that all member work locations have at least one member contact to disseminate bargaining updates. MGEU will work with bargaining committees and elected activists to obtain/update member contact information and to recruit workplace contacts where necessary. This will include:

- Analysis of member database to identify contact information gaps and optimal opportunities to close these gaps;
- Providing member information, messages, materials, and tools to support elected activists in gathering contact information and recruiting workplace contacts; and
- Organizing member meet-and-greet events (e.g. by providing coffee and donuts during breaks) to engage members, gather contact information, and identify workplace contacts.

This initiative will also provide an opportunity to start talking to members about the fact that if they want MGEU to negotiate a better deal, they will need to fight for it, together.

▪ **Organize GOTV Campaigns for Strong Strike Mandates**

To achieve strong strike mandates, MGEU will need to do more than simply schedule strike votes. MGEU bargaining committees will need to actively campaign, including:

- Working closely with workplace activists to undertake get-out-the-vote (GOTV) campaigns; and
- Closely coordinating GOTV campaign efforts with the member outreach and communications campaign - to persuade members that to get a better deal, they need to be willing to take a stand together for it.

Approved by the MGEU Board of Directors on October 20, 2022